



PRESS RELEASE

Inuit Circumpolar Council Sets Course for Impactful Engagement at the International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Inuit Seek Greater Role in International Maritime Decision-Making to Ensure an Equitable and Sustainable Arctic Future

Monday, January 22, 2024— London, UK —In a significant move ahead of key deliberations in London on the reduction of underwater radiated noise (URN) from international shipping, Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) today announced a detailed strategy for enhanced involvement and aspirations for sustainable practices within their engagement at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). As the voice of over 180,000 Inuit across Inuit Nunaat in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka, ICC is poised to bring invaluable Indigenous perspectives to the forefront of global maritime policy to shape the future of Arctic marine governance with full Inuit participation. The strategy builds on ICC’s 2022 Ilulissat Declaration, which is the mandate given by ICC Delegates for this term.

ICC Vice Chair and Head of Delegation at the IMO Lisa Qiluqqi Koperqualuk emphasizes, “For generations our communities have thrived in balance with the Arctic environment. As our homeland faces unprecedented changes, it’s crucial that Inuit Knowledge and stewardship practices are incorporated into international maritime regulations and governance to protect our way of life.”

The ICC position paper focuses on five areas to ensure a comprehensive and impactful engagement at the IMO:

- **Permanent Inuit Representation at the IMO:** ICC is seeking full consultative status at the IMO by 2025, aiming to ensure Inuit voices are integral in decision-making processes, particularly in acknowledging how global matters impact the Arctic region of Inuit Nunaat and vice-versa. This status will enable ICC to offer direct input into IMO regulations, reflecting the unique needs and perspectives of Inuit communities.
- **Utilization of Indigenous Knowledge:** By 2030, ICC envisions a comprehensive utilization of Indigenous Knowledge in all areas of IMO’s work, aligned with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This will be achieved by leveraging Inuit expertise in sustainable maritime practices and environmental stewardship.
- **Ambitious Climate Action:** Reflecting the urgency of the climate crisis, ICC is advocating for a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the shipping sector by 2030, progressing towards complete decarbonization by 2040. To be successful, these goals need to be supported by innovative strategies such as incorporating wind propulsion technology, focusing on energy efficiency, and banning the use of heavy fuel oil.

- **Combating Pollution and Noise:** ICC proposes aggressive measures to reduce and eliminate pollution such as black carbon emissions which increase local warming and ice melt, along with discharges of greywater and the use of scrubbers which dump toxic effluent in important ocean areas. Additionally, ICC seeks to halve underwater radiated noise from ships by 2030, addressing a critical concern for Inuit communities reliant on marine ecosystems for well-being and livelihoods.
- **Protection of Inuit Areas and Biodiversity:** A key aspect of ICC’s strategy involves ensuring that Inuit use areas are protected and conserved from the adverse impacts of shipping. This includes measures to prevent ship transits in these areas and strategies to prevent the introduction of invasive species, thereby safeguarding the region’s unique biodiversity.

‘ICC’s position paper reflects a deep commitment to ensuring that Inuit communities have a decisive voice in shaping a sustainable and responsible future for the Arctic’, said ICC Chair Sara Olsvig. ‘Through our advocacy at the IMO, ICC will champion the rights and well-being of Inuit, highlighting the importance of Indigenous Knowledge in global environmental governance.’

The IMO is holding key meetings to solidify its action plan to reduce URN from international shipping Jan 22-26 in London at IMO HQ. ICC’s guidance in circular MEPC.1/Circ.907 for ships operating in Inuit Nunaat was communicated to IMO members in October 2023. ICC is now recommending an implementation framework, or ‘how to’ protocol, be established to ensure shipping utilizes Indigenous Knowledge and perspectives, and fully engages with Arctic communities to reduce URN from shipping.

ICC’s position paper can be downloaded [here](#), and the Ilulissat Declaration [here](#).

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